

Second Annual Conference
on Excellence... pg 2



IMF, World Bank see more
economic peril ahead pg11

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Santa Rosa celebrates World Earth Day



Corporate Communications Manager SETAR N.V. Suzy Maduro with father Boy and Mother Greta Maduro

World Earth Day, as designated by UN charter, is April 22, but Aruba's Santa Rosa Center of Fishery, Animal Husbandry and Agriculture conducted their celebratory open house yesterday, also marking the finish of a week

of Permaculture seminars and workshops, and the opening of a new petting zoo for children.

The Earth Day event is a highly informative and fun day for all ages, where not only are the services of Santa Rosa center showcased, but environmental groups host informative booths. Aruba generally, but particularly the present government, is in a high state of awareness regarding "green" energy and methods to more efficiently harness Aruba's natural assets.

Revelations during yesterday events included an exposition by a local fish farm raising Florida and Mozambique Red Snapper; while a juvenile Lionfish, a beautiful but invasive species that is ruining reef systems around



Payaso Keke makes a sword for the Minister's son

the Caribbean, prepared to make lunch of some tiny her- ring that shared its tank.

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Dutch Minister of Defense Hans Hillen and Prime Minister Eman meet the press on board the HRMS Rotterdam

HR MS Rotterdam, a Landing Platform Dock, (LPD) steamed into Oranjestad Harbor on Friday afternoon, April 15, after performing a ceremonial salute to the island in the morning. Joining the Ship's Commandant Peter van der Berg on board to receive local dignitaries and press members was Dutch Minister of Defense Hans Hillen, who, along with Aruba's Prime Minister Mike Eman, received island media on the helicopter deck to respond to queries on his visit. Chief of Defense General Peter van Uhm and the Savaneta Marine Camp Commandant, Lieutenant Colonel Edwin Hofma were also present to welcome Aruba's PM.

The issue of the continued presence of the Dutch military at the Savaneta Marine Camp was foremost as it was considered threatened by the Dutch Ministry of Defense being required to make major



Prime Minister Mike Eman with Dutch Minister of Defense Hans Hillen.

spending cuts as part of Dutch Parliament's aim at balancing the budget by 2015. The beginning of April it was announced 12,000 military personnel would be released from duty, of which up to 6,000 may be forced firings; this, and other cuts, will

reduce Holland's military spending to about 3% of the Dutch budget from 3.4% in 2010. Holland's largest military ally, the U.S., spent approximately 19% of its budget for defense in 2010.

Continued on page 5

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TUESDAY AND FRIDAY: LIVE MUSIC

Second Annual Conference on Excellence in Tourism reveals qualities of Aruba's Cruise Industry



ORANJESTAD -- Saturday morning the University of Aruba embarked on a cruise trip with the second annual

conference on Excellence in Tourism. Organized annually by the Faculty of Tourism, under supervision of Prof. Dr. Ryan R. Peterson, this year's conference focused on the state of the cruise industry, and the qualities and competitiveness of Aruba's cruise industry.

After welcoming all visitors and special guests on board, which included Mrs. Evelyn Wever Croes, member of Aruba's Parliament, Mr. Alfonso Boekhoudt, director of the Aruba Ports Authority, and Mrs. Tamara Waldron from the Aruba Tourism Authority, Prof. Dr. Peterson proceeded with a general introduction on the tourism competitiveness of Aruba, highlighting its current good global standing, yet in the same breath underscoring the importance of excellence in an increasingly more dynamic and competitive environment. While we are ranked amongst the top tourism island destinations in the world, competing on quality is simply not sufficient anymore to maintain competitiveness, we need to excel at an increasingly rapid pace, Peterson indicated.

Invited key note speaker

was Mr. Alfonso Boekhoudt, director of the Aruba Ports Authority, who highlighted the different global currents in the highly competitive Cruise industry. Mr. Boekhoudt illustrated that despite global turmoil, the Cruise industry remains bullish, and continues to grow exponentially, where consumer demand outstrips cruise supply. One of the key trends in the Cruise industry is the innovation and diversification in cruise products and experiences, in which different niche markets and themed cruises are emerging, with an emphasis on value and healthy life-styles. Examples provided by Boekhoudt included the emergence of extensive Spa facilities on cruise ships, and the explosion of cultural, artistic, creative, cuisine and sport-themed cruises throughout the Caribbean.

The center stage of the conference was, however, reserved for the Tourism students at the University of Aruba. Based on an extensive research program, which was coordinated by Prof. Dr. Ryan Peterson, second year Bachelor Junior students presented their study on the qualities of Aruba's Cruise industry, covering topics such as the motives of tourists for taking a cruise, the booking channels they used, their impressions and experiences of the Aruba as a cruise destination, the expenditures and spending profile of cruise visitors, and the overall satisfaction rate and return rate of cruise visitors. The provocative presentations definitely gave the conference attendees with some food for thought, in which the potential and possibilities for excellence in tourism, and particularly Cruise tourism, were highlighted.

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Tornadoes wreak havoc, kill 44 in southern US



Debris fill the street after a tornado in Raleigh



Downed power lines and debris

RALEIGH, North Carolina (AFP) – The worst tornadoes to strike the United States in almost three decades have left at least 44 people dead and hundreds injured across six states, emergency officials said yesterday.

The spring storms first hit Oklahoma on Thursday and left a trail of destruction as they whipped up more than 100 reported tornadoes through Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and North Carolina, before petering out in Virginia on Saturday night.

Witnesses described hailstones the size of grapefruit and powerful twisters that ripped the roofs off houses and picked up mobile homes as if they were children's toys.

Large trees knocked out power and fell on cars and houses, killing occupants, while flash floods reportedly washed away an entire camping site in worst-hit North Carolina.

"This is the worst storm, tornado-wise since 1984," Patty McQuillan, a spokeswoman from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the North Carolina state capital Raleigh, told AFP, putting the toll there at 23.

Some 60 homes in North Carolina were completely destroyed on Saturday and more than 400 others damaged with 84,000 people facing days without power.

Television pictures showed whole residential neighborhoods with roofs missing and emergency crews scrambling to clear up the twisted and tangled wreckage.

One twister did its best to wipe the small Oklahoma town of Tushka, population 350, off the map.

The total number of injured was hard to assess as reports were still coming in, but it would probably run into the several hundred, officials said

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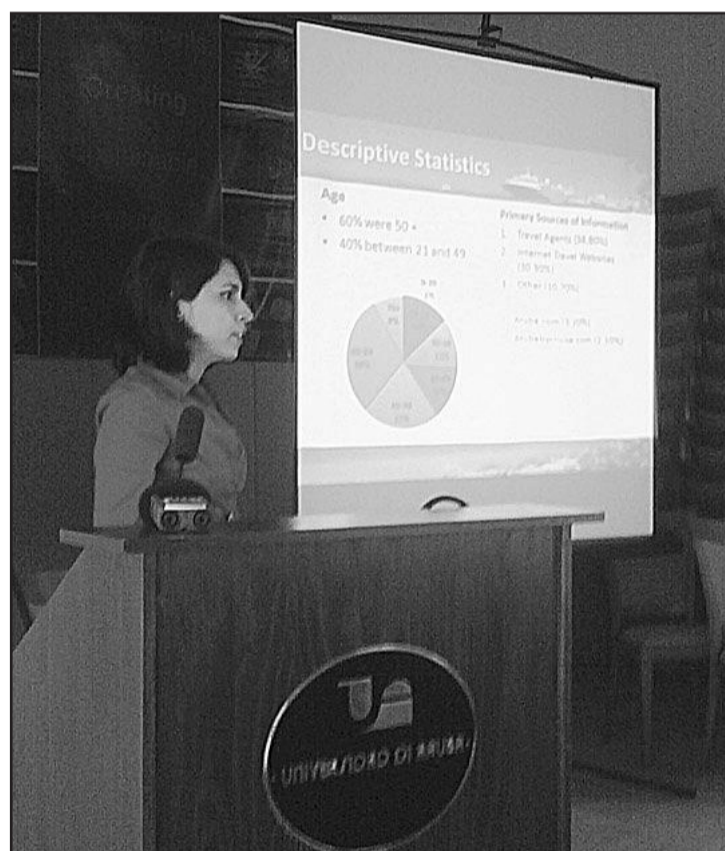


FIVE GUYS

Aruba
Burger and Fries

Second Annual Conference on Excellence in Tourism

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Key messages that resonated throughout the different presentations included the changing multi-generational profile of cruise trips, and the demand for experiential value and value for money. With a commercial value of well over \$150 million, and average expenditures outstripping stay-over visitors by \$30, students concluded that qualities such as product quality, diversity and authenticity, tours and activities, service excellence, friendliness and hospitality of our industry professionals and community, safety and security, and the overall quality of our infrastructure, including both the natural environment and transportation infrastructure remain critical elements in improving the overall quality of Aruba's cruise industry. The study revealed

that a 1% increase in overall qualities would lead to an increase of 40% in satisfaction rates, which would mean a potential increase of 12% in visitor expenditures, equaling an average of \$18 million in additional economic contribution to the island.

Concluding the conference, Prof. Dr. Ryan Peterson emphasized the importance of excelling across different dimensions of tourism, including our conservation of our natural and cultural assets, the need for innovation within the industry, and the importance of governance in driving excellence. Peterson thanked all stakeholders who contributed to the study. In thanking the students, Peterson concluded that you lead by example, setting new standards and excelling with dedication.

Lyrids: a Holy Week shower of swift, vibrant meteors

Stargazers can expect a treat of sorts this Holy Week with the Lyrids meteor shower – an annual phenomenon caused by the Earth's path through the powdery tail of Comet Thatcher (C/1861 G1) – on April 21 and 22, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said.

In its astronomical diary for April, PAGASA said that while the showering streak of meteors will not be numerous, they will be swift and vibrant.

As with all meteor showers, the Lyrids are best observed between midnight and dawn from a clear, dark location with a good horizon.



Look to the northeast to find the meteors appearing to radiate out of the constellation of Lyra the harp. Binoculars or telescopes are not needed to observe meteors. This year the

waning gibbous moon will be in our predawn skies. Therefore, the light of the Moon will interfere with observations of these meteors in the immediate predawn hours.

Speaking Dutch to be requirement for benefit payments

THE HAGUE, The Netherlands -- People who cannot speak Dutch and are not taking a Dutch-language course will no longer be eligible for basic benefit payments. The new policy will apply both to EU and non-EU citizens.

Those who speak no Dutch must take a course as quickly as possible and complete this successfully. If this requirement is not met, the

benefit payment will be cut or halted, under a package of measures presented by Social Affairs Minister Henk Kamp.

To make the measure legally feasible - Kamp has to get around the constitutional ban on discrimination - the measure will apply to everyone, including the Dutch. In practice, it means that the language must be learned both by new immigrants and

by groups that do not speak any or bad Dutch although they have already been living in the Netherlands for years, including many Turks and Moroccans.

The fact that the Dutch will become a requirement for receiving basic benefit is a wish of the conservatives (VVD). The party of Kamp announced a private member's bill for this last year.

Cuba explores for oil as U.S. watches

WASHINGTON -- Less than 75 miles off the Florida Keys, Cuba's plan to explore for oil and gas in waters even deeper than BP's Deepwater Horizon well has U.S. officials on alert.

U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar acknowledged this past week that Cuba's oil and gas explorations are an "issue of concern."

"We're watching it closely," Salazar said. "Obviously, because it's located 60 miles off the coast of Florida... it's an issue that we're monitoring carefully."

Cuba is eager to explore for energy off its coast near Havana. The Spanish energy giant Repsol, which drilled an exploratory well in 2004, is expected to drill another

five to seven such wells as soon as this fall, said Jorge Piñon, an energy expert and visiting research fellow at the Cuban Research Institute at Florida International University.

The presidential commission that investigated last year's BP spill recommended that Cuba and the United States talk about oil drilling.



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FantaSea at the Royal Plaza

Santa Rosa celebrates World Earth Day

Continued from page 1



Jordani shows off megalodon teeth found in local rock quarries



Feeding the Baby goats



Youngsters meet a friendly donkey



fish farmers raise 2 kinds of snapper

The petting zoo was particularly popular for admiring peacocks and feeding baby goats

and puppies that shared a pen. Payaso Keke delighted the crowd and Aruba's Minister of

Tourism, Transport & Labor, Otmar Oduber, with his amusing balloon sculptures.

This year's open house had a very serious purpose behind the festivities, as volunteers from the 'Aruba Conciente' Foundation demonstrated efficient methods for a family to grow and raise their own food. One particular exhibition of interest was the combined set up of Aqua Farming and Hydroponics- referred to as Aquaponics, or Aqua Culture. Urvin Leest, founder, explained that raising fish in tanks produces large amounts of ammonia, while raising plants in water has a waste product that also needs to be disposed of. By devising a system of circulating the water between the fish and plant tanks, the waste products of one, which are actually beneficial to the other, are exchanged, so there is no need for additional fertilizers or a waste elimination system that will not taint the environment.

This principle of a self-sustaining Aruba was the important message behind Santa Rosa Earth Day 2011; a brisk business in fruit tree seedlings was also evident. The thousands that attended went home entertained and enlightened.

by Rosalie Klein



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Dutch Minister of Defense Hans Hillen and Prime Minister Eman . . .

Continued from page 1



HRMS Rotterdam commandant Peter van der berg

The release of the proposed budget cuts revealed Aruba was not among them, which was welcome news for the island government and populace. Defense Minister Hans Hillen confirmed his belief in Aruba being an essential outpost in the Kingdom of the Netherlands and its geographical position in the region ne-

cessitates continuing to maintain a military presence. According to Minister Hillen, the closing of the Savaneta base was never really a consideration. Despite the fact that running the base may be a negligible part of the budget compared to other expenses, much of the cuts consist of what could also be considered negligible. When asked why this information was not released sooner, he stated "We are cherry picking from here and there the services we must reduce. It would not be productive to release the information prematurely, before the budget cuts were finalized, as we are bound to hear objections from one party or another." The proposed cuts have still to be submitted and approved by Parliament.

The Marine Camp in Savaneta is not only a military presence on the island, but is vigorously involved in beneficial projects for the community and has quite some economic impact. They conduct an open house annually every May Day, the proceeds of which are donated to a local foundation,

and they expedite a program for jobless young island men from the Department of the Interior, which teaches self discipline and provides vocational training. For decades, camp personnel have welcomed 1500 islanders to share a traditional community Christmas dinner with them. Military personnel and their families are readily integrated into local society during their time here.

Minister Hillen also cited the Aruba base as an important element in Holland's partnership with the U.S. in the "War on Drugs." The Dutch military works in close cooperation with U.S. drug enforcement agencies and local Coast Guard from Aruba and Curaçao in sorties against attempted drug smuggling from Latin American, a primary reason for the Rotterdam's presence in the region at this time; it arrived in mid-February to assist local efforts and train troops. It is also well suited for rescue operations in case of disaster. Prior to Aruba, it was engaged in protecting vessels attempting to traverse the seas along the coast of Somalia against attack and seizure by pirates.



PM with Savaneta Marine Camp Commandant Edwin Hofma

The Rotterdam has the ability to embark, transport and disembark a full Marine Corps battalion, including the associated combat and logistic support vehicles and equipment. The ship carries provisions and stores for battalion transportation for more than ten days and has its own on board desalination plant. The ship is operated

by a crew of 124, including 13 officers. Accommodation is also provided for a fully equipped marine battalion of up to 613 troops. There are facilities to transport 170 armored personnel carriers, or 33 main battle tanks, and also docking facilities for up to 6 landing craft.

by Rosalie Klein

Sci-Tech

GM leads in clean energy patents



A Chevrolet Volt hybrid electric vehicle goes through assembly.

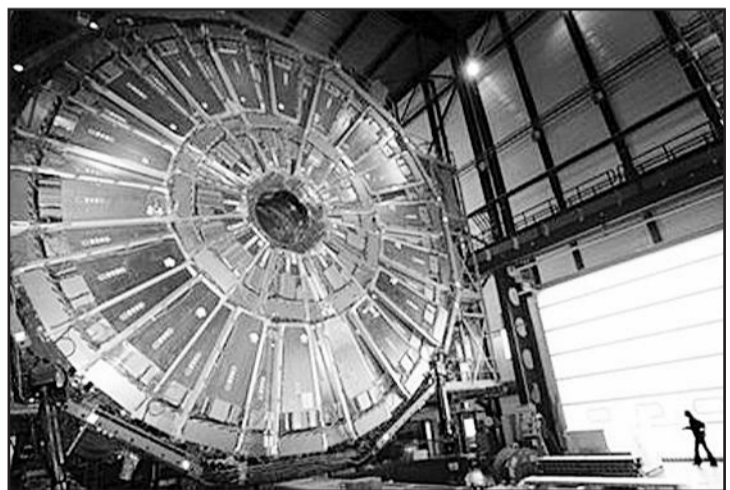
DETROIT, Michigan (AFP) — General Motors received more clean energy patents in the past year than any other company, a study released on the week-end said.

GM's 135 patents represented nearly 14 percent of the 1,881 US patents obtained by 700 organizations in 2010, according to an analysis by the Clean Energy Patent Growth Index.

The successful patent applications came as GM made major investments in research and development despite years of intense restructuring and a 2009 government-backed bankruptcy filing.

Company officials said GM's patents covered hybrid electric vehicles, fuel cells and solar energy, with a focus on improvements to current and future technologies.

Israel becomes CERN nuclear group member



A woman passes behind the world's largest superconducting solenoid magnet at European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN)'s Large Hadron Collider (LHC) particle accelerator.

JERUSALEM, Israel (AFP) — Israel's cabinet yesterday announced it had approved the country's membership in the European Organisation for Nuclear Research, becoming the research group's first non-European delegation.

"Israel is joining an exclusive club, which provides unusual visibility, exposure, prestige and international status," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

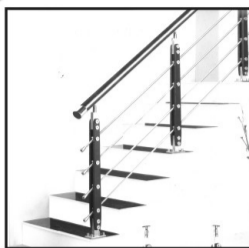
He said membership in the organisation, known as CERN, reflected the "capabilities of Israeli scientists and constitutes recognition of their ability."

Israel had previously held special observer status at the organisation, which is best known for its "atom-smasher," the so-called Large Hadron Collider which is installed in a tunnel straddling the Franco-Swiss border.

Israel first joined the organisation in 1991 as an observer state, and became a special observer state in 2009, gaining the right to attend restricted sessions discussing the Large Hadron Collider.

Israel is expected to become a full member of CERN by 2013, after two years as an associate member.

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Quiet and brilliant, Taiwan's HTC is smartphone star

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AFP) — Taiwanese smartphone maker HTC has risen to global prominence by transforming itself from a contract maker into a viable brand, one of the toughest feats in the fiercely competitive hi-tech industry.

"Quietly Brilliant" is the motto adorning HTC's advertisements -- and quietly, brilliantly it has managed to grow and grow, until recently it stunned the industry by becoming as big as Nokia.

"Today HTC is synonymous with smartphones," said Wang Ying-Yu, a research manager at Industrial Technology Research Institute, a think-tank in the city of Hsinchu in northern Taiwan.

"It has been more successful than any other com-



An advertisement shows the HTC smartphone in Taipei.

pany in Taiwan at pulling off the difficult task of building a brand," he said.

HTC's market value is now around \$33 billion,

about the same level as Nokia and surpassing Blackberry maker Research In Motion's (RIM's) \$28 billion, according to analysts.

11 charged in US crackdown on online poker

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Eleven people have been charged with bank fraud, money laundering, illegal gambling and other offenses in a crackdown on the three largest online poker companies operating in the United States.

The founders of the companies -- PokerStars, Full Tilt Poker and Absolute Poker -- were among those charged in the indictment unsealed Friday by the US attorney for the southern district of New York.

In addition to the charges, restraining orders were issued against 76 bank accounts in 14 countries used by the poker firms, which are all based outside of the United States, along with their payment processors.

Five Internet domain names used by the companies to host their games were also seized by the authorities, who filed a complaint seeking \$3 billion in money laundering penalties and forfeiture from

the poker companies.

The poker companies' websites were stamped with the official seals of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Department of Justice, as well as a message stating "this domain name has been seized by the FBI."

"These defendants concocted an elaborate criminal fraud scheme, alternately tricking some US banks and effectively bribing others to assure the continued flow of billions in illegal gambling profits," said US Attorney

Preet Bharara.

While Internet gambling has been illegal in the United States since 2006, online poker remains a multi-billion-dollar industry with companies using a variety of ways to flout the law, including locating their operations offshore.

According to the indictment, the companies arranged for money received from US gamblers to be disguised as payments to non-existent websites purporting to sell merchandise such as jewelry and golf balls.

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Health & Living

Mystery illnesses plague Louisiana oil spill crews

RACELAND, Louisiana (AFP) — Jamie Simon worked on a barge in the oily waters for six months following the BP spill last year, cooking for the cleanup workers, washing their clothes and tidying up after them.

One year later, the 32-year-old said she still suffers from a range of debilitating health problems, including racing heartbeat, vomiting, dizziness, ear infections, swollen throat, poor sight in one eye and memory loss.

She blames toxic elements in the crude oil and the dispersants sprayed to dissolve it after the BP-leased Deepwater Horizon oil rig exploded in the Gulf of Mexico about 50 miles (80 kilometers) off the coast of Louisiana on April 20, 2010.

"I was exposed to those chemicals, which I questioned, and they told me it was just as safe as Dawn dishwashing liquid and there was nothing for me to worry about," she said of the BP

bosses at the job site.

The local doctor, Mike Robichaux, said he has seen as many as 60 patients like Simon in recent weeks, as this small southern town of 10,000 bordered by swamp land and sugar cane fields grapples with a mysterious sickness that some believe is all BP's fault.

Andy LaBoeuf, 51, said he was paid \$1,500 per day to use his boat to go out on the water and lay boom to contain some of the 4.9 million barrels of oil that spewed from the bottom of the ocean after the BP well ruptured.

But four months of that job left him ill and unable to work, and he said he recently had to refinance his home loan because he could not pay his taxes.

Robichaux, an ear, nose and throat specialist whose office an hour's drive southwest of New Orleans is nestled on a roadside marked with handwritten signs advertising turtle meat for sale,

says he is treating many of the local patients in their homes.

According to a roster compiled by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, a total of 52,000 workers were responding to the Gulf oil spill as of August 2010.

The state of Louisiana has reported 415 cases of health problems linked to the spill, with symptoms including sore throats, irritated eyes, respiratory tract infections, headaches and nausea.

But Bernard Goldstein, an environmental toxicologist and professor at the University of Pittsburgh, said the US government's method of collecting health data on the workers is flawed.

Asked for comment, BP said in an email that "protection of response workers was a top priority" and that it had conducted "extensive monitoring of response workers" in coordination with several government agencies.

Patient's own cells used to probe schizophrenia



PARIS, France (AFP) — Skin cells have become lab-dish tools for probing one of the most enigmatic and distressing disorders of the mind, scientists reported.

Researchers in the United States took samples of skin cells from schizophrenic patients and turned them back to a primitive, versatile state called induced pluripotent stem cells (iPSCs).

From this blank slate, the cells were then cultured to be-

come brain cells, enabling them to be used for lab-dish investigations into schizophrenia that can be tailored to the individual.

"Using this method, we can figure out how a particular drug will affect that particular patient's brain cells without needing the patient to try the drug and potentially suffer the side effects," said Gong Chen of Penn State University in Pennsylvania.

"The patient can be his or her own guinea pig for the design of his or her own treatment, without having to be experimented on directly."

Schizophrenia is a complex condition that is believed to have environmental as well as hereditary factors.

It is characterised by paranoid delusions and hallucinatory voices. Around one

percent of the population worldwide are believed to be afflicted by the disorder.

Tests found that lab-dish neurons from schizophrenic patients had fewer connections with each other compared to cells taken from healthy individuals.

The scientists then used commonly-prescribed antipsychotic drugs to see whether this boosted communication between neighbouring cells. The only one that worked was Loxapine, although it also had an unexpected cascade effect on hundreds of genes.

iPSCs have generated huge excitement since they were discovered in 2006. The idea is that they can be a testbed which does not carry the ethical burden of embryonic stem cells.

Child born after mother given ovary from twin in world first



picture shows Karine Thiriot (L) and her twin sister Stephanie.

PARIS, France (AFP) — A woman suffering a chromosome disorder has given birth to a healthy daughter thanks to an ovarian transplant from her sister in a world first, doctors said.

The baby, named Victoria, was born in the Paris region on March 8, and is free of the disorder known as Turner Syndrome which affects both her mother and her aunt.

Karine Thiriot, 39, said she had been trying to conceive, notably through in vitro fertil-

isation, for some 15 years.

"It was the first such transplant in the world between twins with Turner syndrome," Belgian gynaecologist Jacques Donnez, who carried out the operation in August 2009, told AFP.

It was also the first ovarian transplant to be done in Europe, said Donnez, who has since successfully performed a similar operation involving sisters who are not twins.

Thiriot lacked ovaries because of Turner Syndrome, which affects one girl born in 2,500, but her twin sister, though having a similar chromosome deficiency, was fertile and had two children before the transplant.

A few months after the transplant Thiriot's regular reproductive cycle had established itself and she became pregnant quite normally.

"Victoria is totally normal and doesn't have Turner syndrome," she said.

Easter Brunch

Sunday, April 24th 2011
11:00 am – 3:00 pm

BUFFET

- * Seasonal Fruit Salad
- * Classic Caesar and chopped Salad with assorted dressings and condiments.
- * Authentic Peanut soup with chicken flakes.
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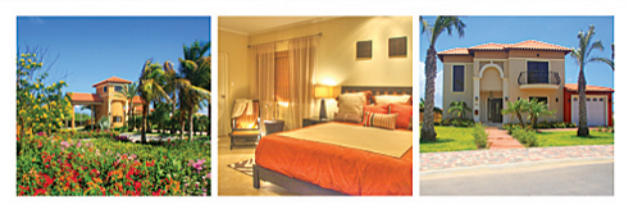
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Divers continue rounding up Lionfish



After the successful Lionfish Derby held recently by Aruba Marine Park Foundation in cooperation with Santa Rosa and the Centro di Pesca Hadicurari, divers have decided to continue the task of eliminating Lionfish from our waters.

During the past weeks many divers and volunteers caught and brought back Lionfish to the fishing center at Hadicurari.

Leading the effort is Diversity Aruba Dive School who brought back as many as 5 Lionfish. Canicio van der Biezen and his group of Life-

guards also reported a capture of 4 more Lionfish. In this way, the message has permeated to all lovers of the sea and particularly our divers to help us control the invasion of Lionfish in our sea water.

By eliminating all Lionfish at the diving sites frequented by divers, we will be able to create a safe haven where small fish can live and grow. In this way our divers are contributing to create fishing reserves which are principal attractions for our tourism industry.

Our fishermen are also actively involved in the control

of Lionfish. Members of the Aruba Marine Park Foundation (AMPF) regularly patrol our waters in search of Lionfish that may not been captured as yet.

We applaud the efforts of Diversity and Aruba Lifeguards for their efforts to capture Lionfish and bring them back for us to study and to use for demonstration purposes for the general public.

For more information you may want to contact one of the organizations mentioned or via facebook.com/hadicurari.



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Spa hosted a spectacular sunset cocktail party on its beach. Tour Operator partners, Aruba Tourism Authority staff and colleague hoteliers enjoyed exotic passion fruit cocktails by food & beverage service manager, Geronimo Blanco, and delicious hors d'oeuvres including grilled duck breast with mandarin oriental sauce, Thai chili coconut shrimp and seared tuna with wasabi ginger sauce prepared by master



chef George Hoek.

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phone the tourism partners enjoyed a truly Caribbean hour at sunset.

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ACROSS

1. Catch
4. Gymnast's trick
8. Military mail abbr.
11. Banking insurance letters
13. Jot
14. ___ and gown
15. Take it easy
16. Honest
17. Major engineering school (abbr.)
18. Landed
20. Certain jugs
22. "I do" vower
25. Thurs. follower
26. Top
27. Loam
30. FBI agents (hyph.)
34. ___ Saints' Day
35. Tossed
37. Wide street (abbr.)
38. Hamburger ingredient
40. Mini's opposite
41. "___ Back" (Beatles)
42. Shed tears
44. Twirls
46. "What one?"
49. Killer whale
51. "___ the ramparts..."
52. Gutter locale
54. Stimulate, as the appetite

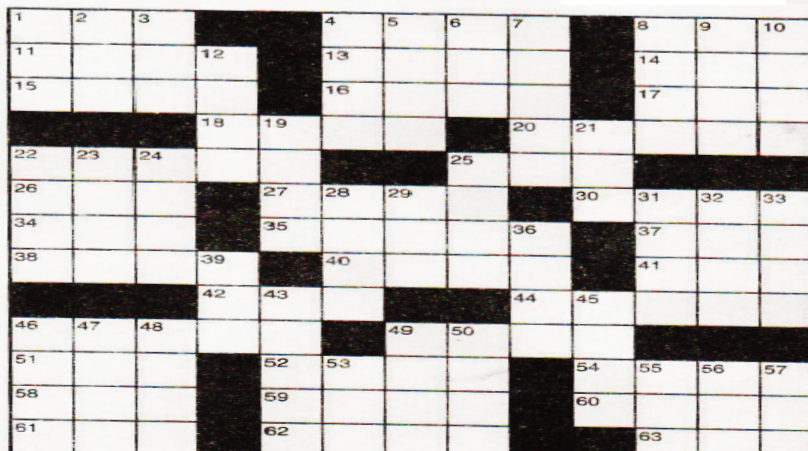
DOWN

58. Acorn dropper
59. Voyage
60. "Finding ___" (2003 film)
61. Hosp. employees
62. Kennedy and Knight
63. Opp. of ENE
1. League for the Cowboys (abbr.)
2. Tumult
3. Cartoonist Keane
4. South Pacific island group
5. Lummox
6. "___ not fair!"
7. Father, formally
8. Zenith

9. Matched set
10. Selects
12. Garbed
19. For fear that
21. Disguise item
22. Tell secrets
23. Work up
24. In need of work
25. Tighten
28. Cry of dismay (2 wds.)
29. Retiree's acct.
31. Wise men
32. Unvarying
33. Fish traps
36. Neighbor of Mich.
39. Broadcast watchdog agcy.
43. Scarlett's suitor
45. Small chess

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46. Small forest
47. Perceive sound
48. Annoys a little
49. Roman writer
50. Insurance agents (abbr.)
53. "You ___ Sixteen"
55. Hack
56. Dorothy's aunt and others
57. Pull a car



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April 16 - April 23

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Sudoku



SOLUTION

8	4	9	1	2	6	7	5	3
2	5	1	7	6	3	2	9	8
9	2	6	5	8	7	4	3	1
5	6	8	3	7	1	9	2	4
3	9	7	8	2	9	1	4	6
4	1	2	6	7	9	8	5	3
2	7	4	1	5	6	9	8	3
1	8	9	7	3	4	6	2	5
6	3	5	2	9	8	7	1	4

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9. A number is Never repeated in a row or column. In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



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Finance

BRIEFS:

Saudi to meet any oil shortfall despite output drop

KUWAIT CITY, (AFP) - Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter, said on Sunday it is ready to supply oil as demanded by customers, but acknowledged that the kingdom's output had dropped last month.

"Saudi Arabia will supply whatever customers ask for," Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi told reporters on arrival in Kuwait to attend an Asian energy ministers' meeting. "The market is over-supplied... (and) Asian demand is very strong," he said.

But he acknowledged that the kingdom's oil output fell to 8.29 million barrels per day in March from as high as 9.1 million bpd the previous month.

The head of the International Energy Agency (IEA), Nobuo Tanaka, said on Sunday that current oil prices were "very high" and that the consumers' agency was alarmed that this could undermine economic growth and crude demand.

Italy protests after France blocks trains to stop demos

ROME, (AFP) - Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini directed his embassy in Paris Sunday to lodge a protest with France after it cancelled trains due to cross the border to thwart migration demonstrations.

Rome wanted "clarifications on measures taken (by Paris) which appear to be illegal and in clear violation of European principles," the minister said.

Frattini was reacting to France's decision earlier Sunday to temporarily cancel all passenger trains due to cross from Italy on the main line between the countries in order to thwart a protest against immigration controls.

A group of French and Italian activists had planned to board what they had dubbed "The Train of Dignity" in the Italian border town of Ventimiglia and cross into France to protest the measures.

EU, IMF start tough talks with Portugal on bailout

LISBON (AFP) - European and IMF officials kick off tough talks today with Portuguese authorities on the scale and the modalities of a massive international bailout expected to involve scores of billions of euros. The negotiations on the sum and pay-back conditions follow an evaluation mission last week to Lisbon by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Portugal goes to early polls on June 5. The government of Prime Minister Jose Socrates government fell last month when parliament rejected its latest austerity plan, forcing Lisbon to bow to market pressure and seek an EU-IMF bailout.

The talks are supposed to agree a programme of tough austerity measures by mid-May for the political parties to agree on before the polls take place.

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IMF, World Bank see more economic peril ahead



US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner (R) speaks with IMF Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Khan (L) and World Bank Group President Robert Zoellick in Washington, DC.

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Global finance chiefs have warned that rising food prices, unanswered joblessness, Mideast turmoil and weak finances in advanced economies could still derail economic recovery.

"We are one shock away from a full-blown crisis," said World Bank president Robert Zoellick about the surge in basic food prices.

"The financial crisis taught us that prevention is better

than cure. We cannot afford to forget that lesson," he said at the close of the annual spring meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

The Bank also warned that a worsening of conditions in the Middle East and North Africa "could derail global growth."

"If oil prices were to rise sharply and durably... global growth could slow by between 0.3 and 1.2 percentage points in 2011 and 2012, respectively," the development lender added in a statement.

Zoellick called for quick Bank action to support Middle East reforms and help shape new social contracts. "Waiting for the situation to stabilize will mean lost opportunities. In revolutionary moments, the status quo is not a winning

hand."

The world's economic technocrats breathed a group sigh of relief during the week after two years battling severe stress on the global financial network, sparked by the US housing and banking breakdown of 2008-2009.

But, repeatedly, IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn said it was not a time for complacency, that multiple ailments remained, and new ones -- like overheating in the emerging economies -- were coming.

"Recovery is underway, but unemployment in most countries still is too high," he said at the close of the Washington meetings. "A lot of repair is still needed" in the finance sectors of advanced economies, he said.

Meanwhile the G20 began organizing development banks and financiers to pull together funds to help Egypt, Tunisia and other North African countries develop and democratize at the same time.

Cuba reforms won't cure endemic problems: dissidents



President of Cuba since 2006; Raul Castro

MADRID, Spain (AFP) - Economic reforms announced by Cuba's president will not cure the communist-ruled country's endemic ills and only aim to improve its international credibility, a dissident spokesman said.

"These are palliative measures which alleviate but do not cure the endemic ills, which remain essentially the lack of freedom and the absence of rights," said Ernesto Gutierrez, secretary general of the Feder-

ation of Cuban Organisations in Spain.

"These reforms are only meant to buy time and improve (Cuba's) international credibility, especially in the financial and economic sectors," he told AFP.

Gutierrez said Saturday's announcement of reforms by President Raul Castro "seeks to alleviate the economic debacle facing the country but in no way tries to solve its real problems."

Castro outlined before the Communist Party Congress more than 300 economic reforms his government plans to set in motion, including eliminating 20 percent of state employees and opening the economy to private enterprise.

To help pick up slack on the unemployment front, Havana is expanding the categories of legal self-employment to 178, decentralising the food distribution system, expanding allowable areas of foreign investment, slashing subsidies

and imposing a tax system.

Cuban dissidents also dismissed Castro's announcement that he backed political term limits of 10 years at most for top leadership spots in a country he and his brother Fidel Castro have led for more than five decades.

"Raul Castro is close to 80. He knows that he can be around in good health for another 10 years at the most," said Gutierrez.

SATURDAY'S Crossword Answer

A	W	L	I	N	C	M	I	M	I
T	H	A	W	B	O	O	A	N	O
M	O	T	H	I	S	M	N	I	B
E	D	S	P	O	U	T	S		
C	H	E	E	R	T	A	R	A	
R	A	L	L	I	E	N	G	L	A
A	I	M	P	A	Y	L	E	I	
B	R	O	N	C	O	S	S	O	L
E	A	V	E	S	W	I	P	E	
M	A	P	L	E	E	W	E		
L	O	C	H	R	E	D	R	I	P
B	O	R	E	T	R	I	S	K	I
S	T	E	W	Y	E	T	E	N	D

Gold Coast Aruba: This is the time to invest

Managers of Gold Coast Aruba, the island's newest and most innovative gated community, report that sales are picking up nicely as the global economy begins to recover and those with a bit of disposal income are looking to invest in a sure thing. Gold Coast Directing Manager Fito Croes has noticed a surprising percentage of owners are barely using the villas or town homes they purchase, but taking advantage of Gold Coast's rental services to turn their investment into ready income.

"The greater portion of home owners are using their 'home away from home' in Aruba to escape the winter months, or spend holidays with the family on the island," he remarked, "but I am gratified by how many are buying because they felt secure with real estate investment on Aruba. They really study the history and economy of the island and



town homes, villas and condominiums with a stunning clubhouse complemented by two additional pools decks, one of which has been open for a year, the other will be ready for the holidays 2010. They expect the clubhouse to be ready for the community with a workout room and spectacular facilities by the end of 2011. It will also house a restaurant and mini-market.

Owners who purchased upon the groundbreaking only

ing available. Partnering with two of Aruba's top providers of kitchens and bathrooms enables developers to offer custom options for clients, so buyers can individualize their homes. An elegant and chic standard package is available, or island designers will assist owners in finishing the décor to their specific tastes.

There are many aspects to purchasing property; not the least is the future value of the investment. To further enhance this, Gold Coast managers have inaugurated a number of in-house services and are now negotiating with Interval International to provide a huge international pool for investors to tap for renters either short or long term. Property exchange for a vacation in another destination will also be available. Gold Coast's own rental services have also proven highly successful in assisting owners in renting their villas; 24-hour security and maintenance services also tip the scales when it is time to make a decision. Aside from all this, housekeeping, babysitting and catering services are also available for community members as well as airport pick-up and drop-off and pre-shopping services so cupboards and refrigerators are stocked upon arrival, which can all be arranged through their home management de-

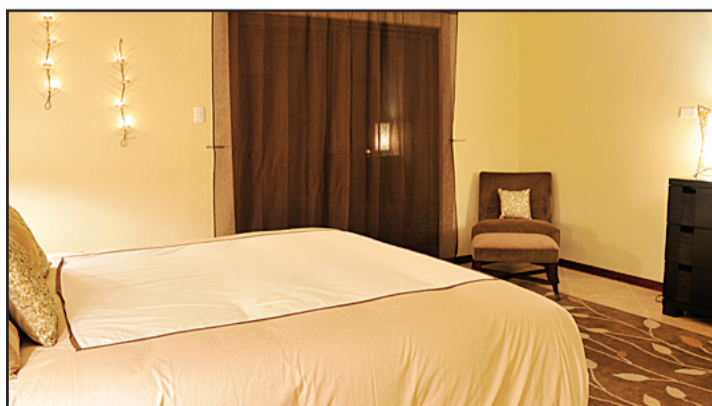


are impressed with the political stability and continually increasing value of prime locations. Gold Coast is in the heart of Malmok, considered Aruba's most exclusive community; in this area, the value of properties has only increased over time. It is minutes to the best beaches and all the action, and yet offers a quiet and secluded getaway; we are very pleased by the response to our concept."

Fito, with his sister Mayrin and brother Rudy run Cas Bon, which has been constructing homes and building developments for all budgets for nearly twenty years. "Gold Coast Aruba is the jewel in our crown," observes Fito. "We were very excited about this project; the scope and amenities. We talked to countless island visitors to find out what they would really want in a permanent residence on Aruba, and took from there."

Input from frequent vacationers who dreamed of their own home in Aruba will eventually be a community of 260

a few short years ago, are already enjoying a nearly 50% appreciation on their investment, particularly those taking advantage of the management association's rental service. There is always a great demand for Aruba and facilities such as those at Gold Coast, making it easy for some owners to earn their mortgage payments or others to see an immediate re-



turn on their investment.

The design of the structures is open, airy and spacious, fully deploying the island environment, with the finest quality construction and finish-

partment.

Visit their website: www.goldcoastaruba.com for more details and availability or call 586-2200 to arrange a personal tour.

Taj Mahal Restaurant, an authentic culinary excursion



When Bharat Shah, originally from India, but now a successful businessman in California, put on a spectacular wedding in Aruba for his daughter Lisa and her groom Kalpesh, they welcomed hundreds of friends and relatives from around the world, including the "old country."

When all the wedding guests had finally arrived in Aruba, Bharat hosted an official welcome party along the shore in Palm Beach, and he chose to have it catered by Taj Mahal restaurant, he was that impressed by their cuisine.

If you like your Indian food authentic, or are looking for a new and unique dining experience, an evening at Taj Mahal will deliver a memorable meal. A seemingly endless menu offers scores of choices for fish, chicken, lamb and vegetarian dishes that are "the real deal," discover that Indian food goes way beyond curry!

A taste-testing crew from THE MORNING NEWS chose a selection of their singular starters and two main courses with saffron rice, served family style, which provided a fine example of the versatility of their chef.

Taj Mahal's Tai Choice is a great way to start the meal and be initiated into the joys of Indian cuisine, offering a diverse selection of traditional favorites. It contains hearty portions of Pakoras, crispy vegetarian fritters, Aloo Tikki, potato cutlets, Chicken Tikka, tender chicken breast pieces seasoned just right, and shaped and seasoned ground lamb, charmingly dubbed "Sheik Kebabs." All is served on a bed of sliced onions and brought to your table on a sizzling platter, and you will want to dish those sautéed onions on to one of their tasty Indian breads called Naan, leaving behind not a single crumb. Main dishes are accompanied by a choice of rice, mixed vegetables rich with garlic, or Naan, plain, buttered, onion or garlic, and you will want to order an extra basket or two of this tasty delight, on

which you can spoon your main course, as well. Poori is crispy fried naan, and most definitely worth the extra two dollars to sample with your meal.

Our group also added an appetizer of crunchy Samosas, the Indian form of a potato knish, served with either cilantro or sweet and sour sauce. A platter of their Jhinga, large, crispy-fried shrimp in a delicate batter is ample enough to serve as a main course, though featured on their appetizer menu.

As we mentioned, main courses are served family style, in beautiful little pots that sit upon a candle to keep them warm. Our group sampled the "Mutton Saagwala," also known as "Lamb Shag" which is cooked in a thick sauce of yogurt and spinach, and the "Fish Hara Masala," moist, tender chunks of fish in a rich sauce featuring cilantro as the main flavoring. This is offered in mild, medium and very spicy, we found the medium quite spicy enough for us; it left a tingle on the tongue.

The family style service allows everyone at the table to sample a bit of this and that, and we heartily recommend you do, to truly appreciate this authentic bit of India in Aruba. Open for lunch and dinner, Taj Mahal sports a cozy and intimate air-conditioned dining room and a small outdoor terrace for those that enjoy dining al fresco. They have an exotic dessert menu to match, but our group was too stuffed to partake; there was even enough left to box up and provide a lunch next day for the lucky first person to get to it!

Located behind the Royal Plaza Mall, across from Aruba's Numismatic Museum, Taj Mahal offers a dining experience that is truly out of the ordinary; they feature an excellent and tasty selection for vegetarians too. If you are a fan of Indian food, or have been toying with trying it, Taj Mahal is the place for a very affordable dining experience and the real deal! Call 588-4494 for reservations.

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Top US orchestra to file for bankruptcy



PHILADELPHIA, Pennsylvania (AFP) – The acclaimed Philadelphia Orchestra said it would file for bankruptcy, the first major US performance ensemble to do so during the nation's current economic turmoil.

Kate Johnston, a spokeswoman for the 111-year-old orchestra, said however that programming was unaffected for now.

"All concerts are going on as scheduled, including a concert tonight," she told AFP Saturday. The orchestra was performing Mahler's Symphony No. 4.

The Philadelphia Orchestra Association confirmed its Board of Directors voted earlier to file for bankruptcy protection.

Despite the expected filing, the orchestra is fighting for its life and plans a \$214 million fundraising attempt within the next few days, according to The Philadelphia Inquirer.

At the beginning of the performance of Mahler, an orchestra member stood to thank the audience for its support.

Meanwhile, outside the hall, a small crowd gathered to watch the performance on a small television. Concertgoers were worried about their orchestra's future.

"It's very sad," said Joel Porter, visiting from New Jersey to hear the Mahler piece. "It risks causing musicians to secure their own future. They might look elsewhere."

Board chairman Richard Worley said earlier this week

that income and expenses faced a "fantastic imbalance" and that although the rescue plan would be difficult, "I believe we can do it."

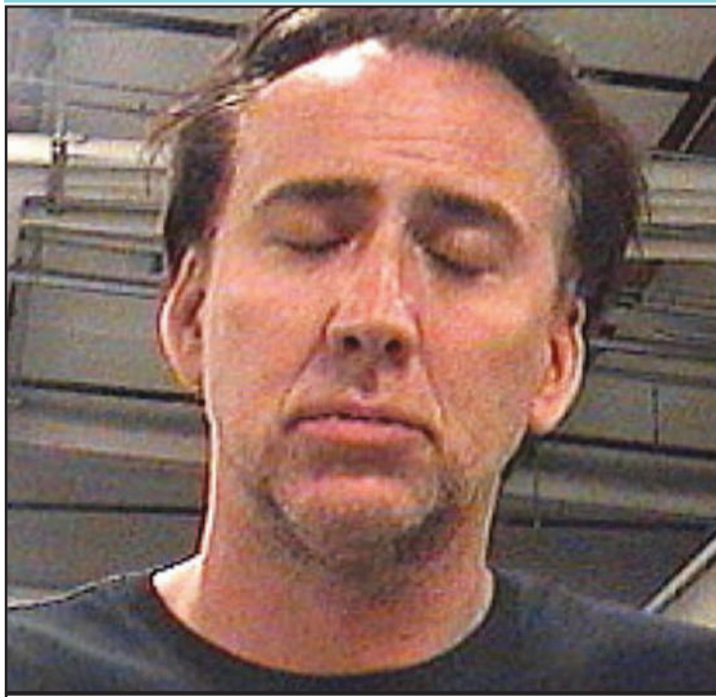
A number of major arts groups, including museums and opera companies, have faced financial strain since the recession and weak economic recovery in the United States. However, none as prestigious as the Philadelphia group have gone so close to the edge.

The crisis announcement came as the city was hosting the inaugural Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts. The festival features over 135 events and 1,500 artists spread over 25 days.

Founded in 1900, The Philadelphia Orchestra considers itself one of the world's leading ensembles, with acclaimed performances, major world tours and best-selling recordings. It is viewed on a par with orchestras in Boston, Chicago, New York and a handful of other major venues.

However, falling audience numbers and sky rocketing costs have paired the musical excellence with a dismal financial situation.

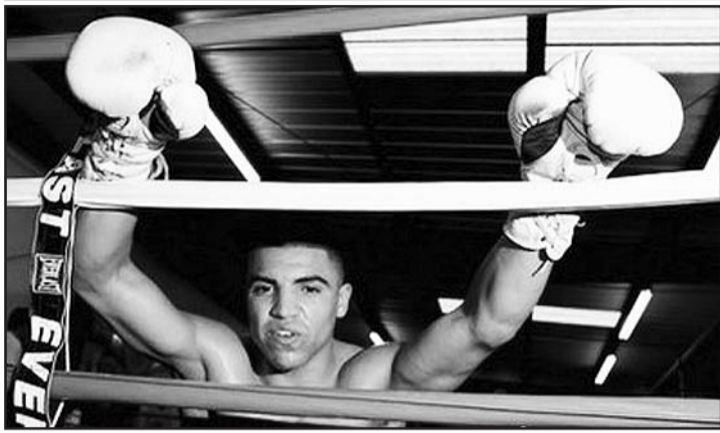
Actor Nick Cage arrested in New Orleans



This booking photo released by Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office shows US actor Nicolas Cage who has been arrested in the southern city of New Orleans "after getting drunk" and having a heated argument with his wife in the French Quarter, police said. The officers arrested the actor on a charge of domestic abuse battery as well as disturbing the peace. Cage posted \$11,000 bond and was released, according to documents from the Orleans Parish Sheriff's office. A court date was scheduled for May 31.

AFP/Photo

Ortiz dethrones Berto in welterweight thriller



Victor Ortiz (pictured in 2010) on week-end dethroned previously unbeaten World Boxing Council welterweight champion Andre Berto.

MASHANTUCKET, Connecticut (AFP) – Victor Ortiz dethroned previously unbeaten World Boxing Council welterweight champion Andre Berto Saturday in an action-packed 12-round fight that saw both men on the canvas.

Ortiz emerged with a convincing unanimous decision, improving to 29-2-2 with 22 wins inside the distance as he captured the WBC belt.

Ortiz knocked down Berto for the first time in the first round, and Berto responded by sending the off-balance challenger to the canvas in the second.

Ortiz rattled Berto in the third and punished the champion in the middle rounds.

The sixth was a thriller as Berto, standing his ground in the middle of the ring, knocked down Ortiz, only for Ortiz to drop the champion later in the same round. It was Berto's first defeat in 28 professional fights.

The ringside judges scored it 115-110, 114-112 and 114-111 for Ortiz, who had a point deducted in one round for hitting behind the head.

"I fought like a possessed man, because that's what the world and the crowd of boxing made me," said Ortiz, who said he was stung by predictions that he couldn't beat Berto.

Berto had made five suc-

cessful title defences since he knocked out Miguel Rodriguez in June 2008 to take the belt.

But he looked like he might not make it out of the

first round. Ortiz stunned him with a right followed by a left hook that appeared to put the champion down, although referee Michael Ortega ruled it a slip.

Ortiz produced another knockdown before Berto made it out of the first.

Ortiz was in control in the second when Berto backed him up with a short right. The challenger stayed on his feet and took a brief count from Ortega.

Seconds before the bell, however, Ortiz sent Berto down with another left hook.

"I think I was very highly underrated," the 24-year-old Ortiz said. "I knew I carried as much power as him, if not more." Berto said he wanted a rematch.

"T90 Tracer Doma", the official football for the Copa America 2011



LA PLATA, Argentina: Brazilian former footballer Ronaldo smiles during the presentation of "T90 Tracer Doma", the official football for the Copa America 2011, at Ciudad de La Plata stadium in La Plata, some 62 Km south of Buenos Aires. Argentina will host the Copa America to be held from July 1 to 24.

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Stoke thrash Bolton to reach first FA Cup final



Stoke City's Jonathan Walters (L) celebrates scoring his goal

LONDON, England (AFP) – Stoke City stormed into their first ever FA Cup final after a first-half goal spree inspired a 5-0 win against Bolton in Sunday's semi-final at Wembley.

Tony Pulis's side will face Manchester City in the final on May 14 after three goals from Matthew Etherington, Robert Huth and Kenwyne Jones in the space of 19 minutes destroyed Bolton before the match had even reached half-time.

Jonathan Walters capped Stoke's perfect day with two more goals after the interval.

Stoke were appearing in their first semi-final in the competition since 1972, the year they also won their last significant piece of silverware when they beat Chelsea in the League Cup final.

Now they could eclipse even that famous achievement if they beat Roberto Mancini's

expensively-assembled outfit at Wembley next month.

Etherington told ESPN: "We scored some great goals today. We get our knockers, people say certain things about us. Today was our day to prove them wrong."

"We are used to being the underdogs. The manager said that before the game and we will be the underdogs in the final as well. Bring it on."

Stoke had been beaten in successive FA Cup semi-finals in 1971 and 1972, but any fears of another letdown were completely banished when Jones punished more poor Bolton defending in the 30th minute.

It was the perfect end to arguably the greatest day in Stoke's history as they became the first team for 72 years to win a semi-final by a five-goal margin.



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Open Monday - Friday 3:00 p.m./Saturday@12 - Sunday 10:30 a.m.

US sprinter Jeter wins 100m at Mt. SAC



File picture shows American sprinter Carmelita Jeter

WALNUT, California (AFP) — American sprinter Carmelita Jeter won the 100m at the Mt. SAC relays in 10.99sec, becoming the first woman this season to

run under 11 seconds.

Jeter, who earned world championships bronze in 2007 and 2009, comfortably defeated compatriot Consuella Moore (11.31sec) in a race run in a negligible wind of -0.1m/sec.

In the high jump, American Jesse Williams cleared 2.34m, four centimeters better than the previous best in 2011, while in the women's long jump Brittney Reese leapt 6.83m to beat the previous best of the year by 22 centimeters.

Allyson Felix, America's three-time defending world champion in the 200m, made a cameo appearance as she helped the "Kersee All Stars" squad win the women's 4x100m relay in 43.10sec.

"It's just a fun meet," said Felix, who is from nearby Los Angeles. "I've run here since high school, I just enjoy it. It's the only time that my family who are here can come out and support me."

REMEMBER to



Buckle up

USA relegated after Fed Cup white-washing

BERLIN, Germany (AFP) — Germany white-washed the United States 5-0 on Sunday to relegate the 17-times winners from the Fed Cup's top tier for the first time in the competition's 48-year history.

After Germany enjoyed a 2-0 lead from Saturday, Andrea Petkovic continued the hosts domination with a straight-sets victory over Melanie Oudin early on Sunday which gave the Germans an unassailable 3-0 lead.

The 23-year-old Petkovic needed just one hour 18 minutes to beat 19-year-old Oudin 6-2, 6-3, while team-mate Sabine Lisicki blitzed her teenage opponent Christine McHale in 88 minutes for a 6-



Germany's Andrea Petkovic returns the ball to Melanie

3, 6-4 victory.

And doubles pair Julia Gorges and Anna-Lena Groenefeld completed the rout when they bounced back from losing the first set to enjoy a 3-6, 6-3,

6-1 victory over Liezel Huber and Vania King.

"We have proved that we belong in the top tier and we led from the front," said Australian Open quarter-finalist Petkovic after the Germans success.

The United States had reached the Fed Cup final for the last two years but came to Stuttgart with an inexperienced squad.

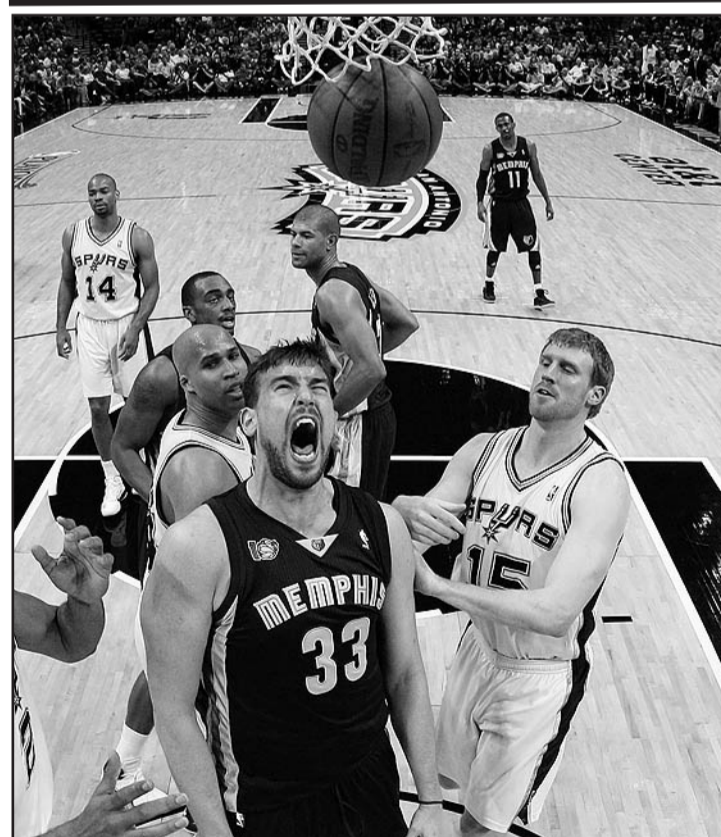
The Americans were missing their three leading players, including both the Williams sisters -- Serena and Venus Williams -- as well as Bethanie Mattek-Sands, ranked 41st in the world.

Germany will now compete in the top tier of the Fed Cup in 2012 and team coach Barbara Rittner, who was part of the Germany team led by Steffi Graf which won the title in 1987 and 1992, was delighted.

"We have a lot of quality in the team and they all encourage each other," said Rittner.

But Petkovic said her current career-high ranking of 19th in the world was both a blessing and a curse.

"This is a new situation for me. I've noticed already in Miami that the young players play their best tennis against me," admitted the 23-year-old, who will contest the WTA tournament in Stuttgart starting today.



SAN ANTONIO, Texas: Center Marc Gasol #33 of the Memphis Grizzlies reacts against the San Antonio Spurs in Game One of the Western Conference Quarterfinals in the 2011 NBA Playoffs yesterday at AT&T Center in San Antonio, Texas

AFP/Photo



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Kenyan double in London Marathon



Mary Keitany of Kenya crosses the finish line to win the women's 2011 London Marathon on Sunday.

LONDON, England (AFP) — Emmanuel Mutai shattered the course record at the London Marathon as the Kenyan won the men's race in a time of 2:04.40 on Sunday.

Mutai had finished second here last year and he went one better this time thanks to a spectacular run that beat the previous best time of 2:05.10 set by Samuel Wanjiru in 2009.

The 26-year-old's time was also the fifth-fastest ever in a marathon and was just reward for a dominant display.

He broke away from three-time winner Martin Lel at around the 21-mile mark and sprinted to the finish to ensure his record time.

Kenya's Lel held off compatriot Patrick Makau to take second place in a sprint finish.

Mutai admitted his victory had been a long time coming after several years striving for a marathon success.

"I'm happy with the result, since I came to run in London

I was fourth twice and second once, and now my dream has come true," he told BBC TV.

"It's a fantastic achievement for me personally."

It was a triumphant day for competitors from the east African country, as Kenya's Mary Keitany won the women's race in a time of 2:19.18.

Keitany relegated defending champion Liliya Shobukhova of Russia into second, with Kenya's Edna Kiplagat in third on her London Marathon debut.

She pulled ahead of the pack at the 15-mile mark and increased the pace on her way to running the fourth fastest marathon of all time.

The 29-year-old, who began her marathon career as a pacesetter in 2007, becomes the tenth woman to run a marathon in under 2hr 20min.

Keitany's impressive showing makes her a strong medal contender for the Olympic marathon at London 2012.

Nadal wins seventh Monte Carlo Masters



Rafael Nadal of Spain reacts after defeating David Ferrer of Spain in their final match of the Monte Carlo Tennis Masters tournament in Monaco, Sunday, April 17, 2011.

MONTE CARLO, Monaco (AFP) — Rafael Nadal pronounced himself "a lucky guy" after sweeping to a seventh straight title at the Monte Carlo Masters by dispatching fellow Spaniard David Ferrer 6-4, 7-5 on Sunday.

"It would have been impossible to imagine a few years ago winning seven titles here," Nadal said after a victory in

two hours and 16 minutes, his 12th of 16 against his good friend. "I'm a lucky guy to have done this by age 24."

Nadal faced a few minor challenges on court in post-card-perfect conditions with a sleek, discreet mega-yacht tethered just offshore at the Mediterranean playground.

"I'm very emotional, it's so fantastic to win again in Monte

Carlo," said Nadal, the only man to win six titles at the same event -- let alone seven.

"I feel the most emotions at the Masters events and it's so special here."

Nadal was playing his third straight final after losing to Novak Djokovic in title bids last month at Indian Wells and Miami.

Nadal was 24 hours removed from his three-hour struggle with an injured Andy Murray, who played their three-set epic with a right elbow injected with pain-killing cortisone.

Murray and his team drove the 600 kilometres to Barcelona on Sunday, where he will have a medical examination and decide over the next few days if he can play in the ATP event as second seed behind Nadal.

Ferrer admitted that he had again been beaten by the best.

"Rafa is incredible on clay, he's everywhere at the same time," said Ferrer. "He's the best player on clay in history."

Nadal has ruled at Monte Carlo since losing his only match in the principality in his 2003 debut year as a 16-year-old.

He has now won 37 straight Monte Carlo matches with a 39-1 record at the tournament.

The victory was also revenge for Ferrer's straight-sets win over Nadal in an Australian Open quarter-final three months ago.

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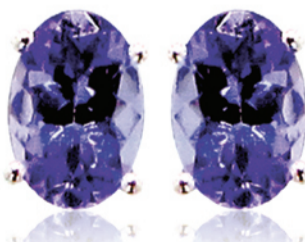


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